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FEB
DAKOTA NORTH™
INVESTIGATIONS
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DAKOTA
RICKY
S. J.
MAD DOG
AMOS
CLEO
DURING THE SEASON, GRINDEWALD, SWITZERLAND IS A CHIC SKI RESORT. AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, OUR HEROES ARE TOO TIED UP TO ENJOY THE SLOPES. THEY'RE TRYING TO KEEP SHEIK IBN BHEIK FROM FINDING THE ONLY REMAINING SAMPLE OF A DEADLY NERVE GAS.
DAKOTA, TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON. I'M YOUR ONLY BROTHER, I DESERVE TO KNOW.
RICKY, KEEP QUIET. YOU AND YOUR FASHION MODEL GIRLFRIEND GOT US INTO THIS. IF WE LIVE, I'LL EXPLAIN.
I SEARCHED ALL THE PRISONERS, SHEIK IBN BHEIK. I FOUND NO TRACE OF THE PEN CONTAINING THE NERVE GAS.
CATS AMONG THE PIGEONS
MARTHA THOMASES WRITER
TONY SALMONS ARTIST
MAX SCHEELE COLORIST
JOHN MORELLI LETTERER
LARRY HAMA EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER CHIEF

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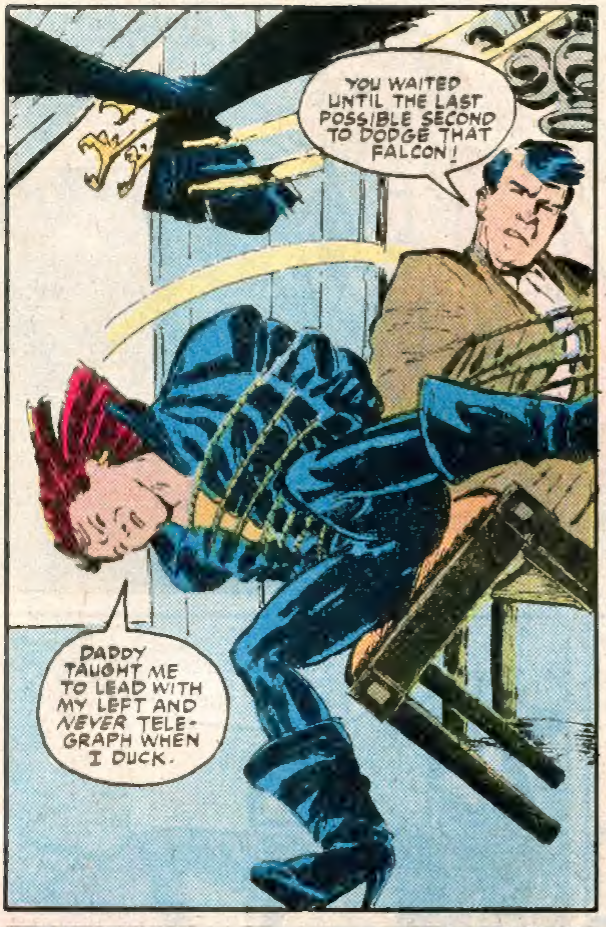
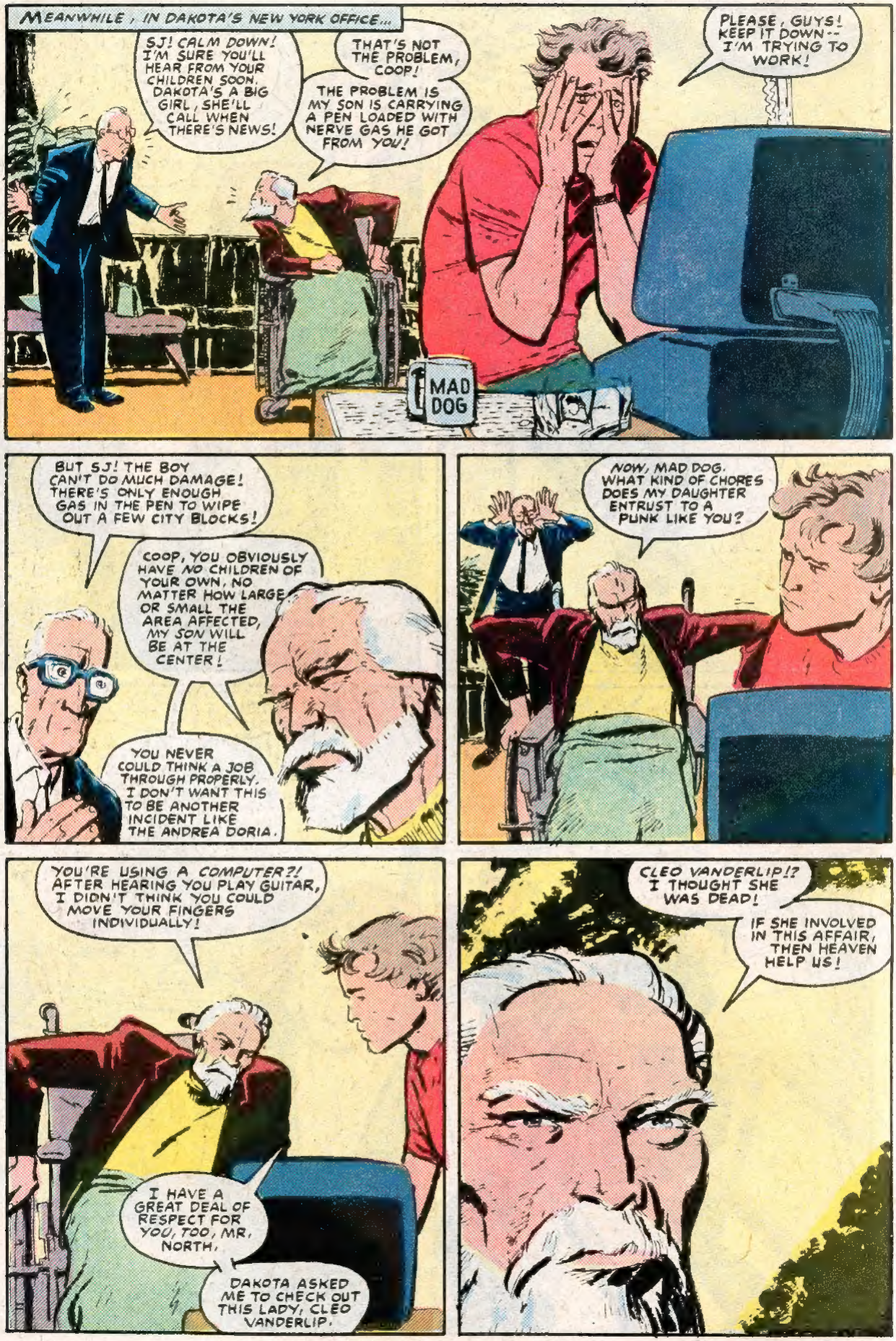
OBVIOUSLY, FOOL, YOU DID NOT SEARCH THEM THOROUGHLY ENOUGH!
I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, AMOS... MY VAIN LITTLE BROTHER THOUGHT A BEAUTY LIKE DAISY KANE WANTED HIM FOR HIS LOOKS, AND I HAD TO PUT HIS HEAD STRAIGHT.
BUT, MASTER...
THERE'S NERVE GAS IN THAT PEN? SINCE WHEN?
HEY, ROCKY, WATCH ME PULL A RABBIT OUT OF MY HAT.
NO SWEAT, DAKOTA. THIS IS A CHANGE OF PACE FROM MY REGULAR POLICE WORK.
YOU NEVER THINK THINGS THROUGH, RICKY.
AS HE WAS DAKOTA NORTH, CLEO AND I WERE READY TO PAY FOR IT. NOW WE SHALL HAVE IT FOR FREE.
COOP GAVE YOU THAT PEN AFTER HE SWIPED IT FROM HIS COMMANDING OFFICER. HE THOUGHT THE GENERAL WAS TRYING TO SELL IT.
MEOW.
YOU AND CLEO? YOU'RE IN THIS TOGETHER?
NOW I SEE HOW THIS FITS TOGETHER.
MEOW MEOW
RRRRRRRR
WHAT A TOUGH GUY. CAN'T KILL A CAT BY YOURSELF. YOU HAVE TO SEND A FALCON.
YOU CAN'T EVEN KILL A BOUND WOMAN BY YOURSELF.
I WOULDN'T DIRTY MY HANDS ON YOU, DAKOTA NORTH.
BUT I WILL WIPE YOUR BLOOD FROM MY BIRD'S CLAWS.

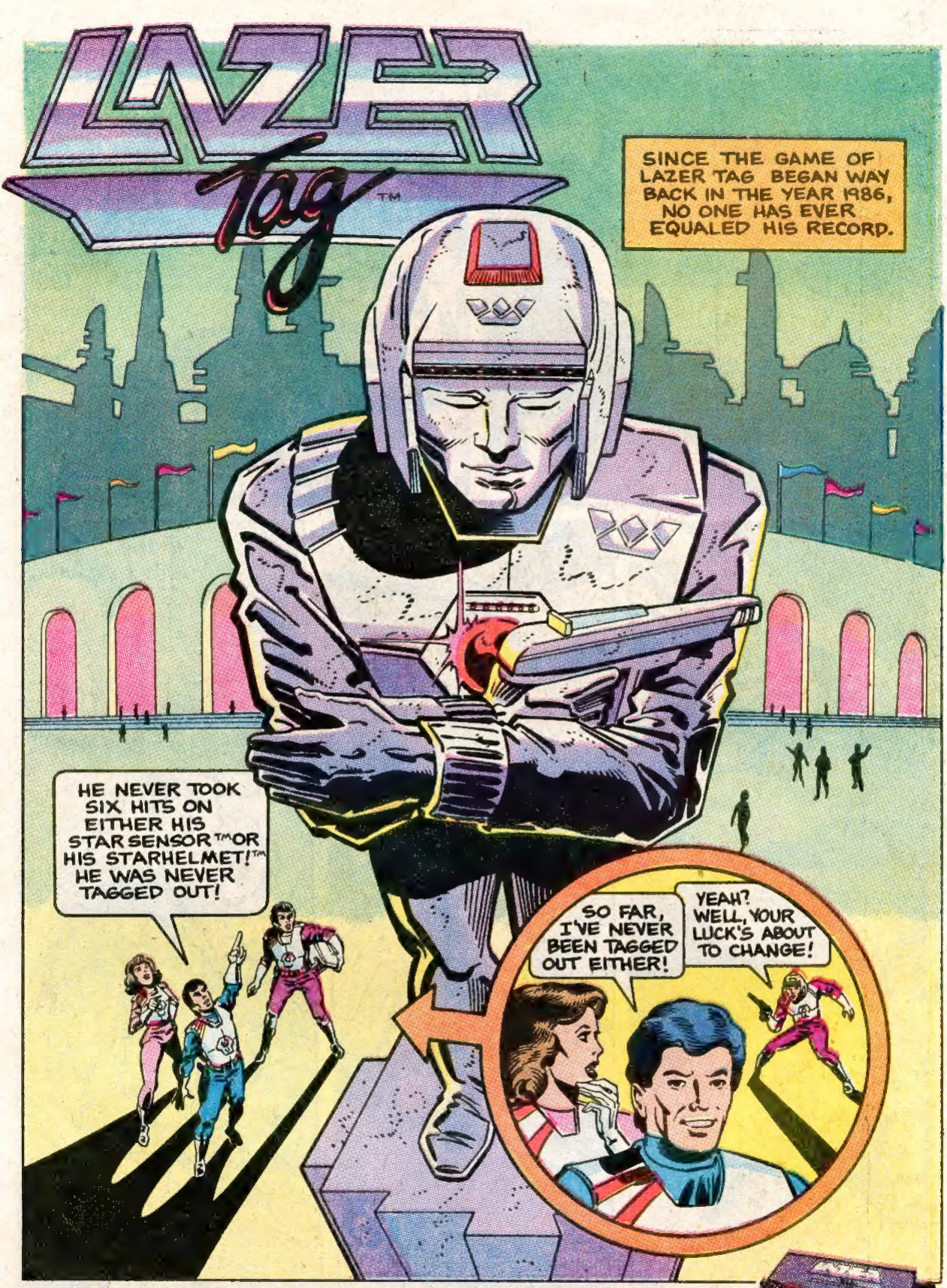

YOU WAITED UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE SECOND TO DODGE THAT FALCON!
DADDY TAUGHT ME TO LEAD WITH MY LEFT AND NEVER TELEGRAPH WHEN I DUCK.

AH! MISS NORTH PUTS ON AN ENTERTAINMENT FOR ME AND MY LOYAL SUBJECTS. ISN'T THIS THOUGHTFUL OF HER?
WE WILL SHOW OUR GRATITUDE BY USING HER SKULL AS A DOORSTOP.
YES, MASTER.
PLEASE, MASTER.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE DIVERTED, SHEIK. AND I'D LOVE TO CHAT, BUT I'VE GOT TO KEEP MY EYE ON THE BIRDIE.
RICKY, PAY ATTENTION. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME, I WANT YOU--

CAN'T IT WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE CARTOON, SIS?
RICKY! DAKOTA DOESN'T NEED YOUR SMART MOUTH!
THAT'S OKAY, AMOS, NOW I'M MOTIVATED TO BEAT THIS BIRD!
HULK
THAT WAY, I'LL BE ALIVE TO SMACK THAT SMART MOUTH!


MEANWHILE, IN DAKOTA'S NEW YORK OFFICE...
SJ! CALM DOWN! I'M SURE YOU'LL HEAR FROM YOUR CHILDREN SOON. DAKOTA'S A BIG GIRL, SHE'LL CALL WHEN THERE'S NEWS!
THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM, COOP!
THE PROBLEM IS MY SON IS CARRYING A PEN LOADED WITH NERVE GAS HE GOT FROM YOU!
PLEASE, GUYS! KEEP IT DOWN -- I'M TRYING TO WORK!
MAD DOG
BUT SJ! THE BOY CAN'T DO MUCH DAMAGE! THERE'S ONLY ENOUGH GAS IN THE PEN TO WIPE OUT A FEW CITY BLOCKS!
COOP, YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE NO CHILDREN OF YOUR OWN, NO MATTER HOW LARGE OR SMALL THE AREA AFFECTED, MY SON WILL BE AT THE CENTER!
YOU NEVER COULD THINK A JOB THROUGH PROPERLY. I DON'T WANT THIS TO BE ANOTHER INCIDENT LIKE THE ANDREA DORIA.
NOW, MAD DOG. WHAT KIND OF CHORES DOES MY DAUGHTER ENTRUST TO A PUNK LIKE YOU?
YOU'RE USING A COMPUTER?! AFTER HEARING YOU PLAY GUITAR, I DIDN'T THINK YOU COULD MOVE YOUR FINGERS INDIVIDUALLY!
I HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT FOR YOU, TOO, MR. NORTH.
DAKOTA ASKED ME TO CHECK OUT THIS LADY, CLEO VANDERLIP.
CLEO VANDERLIP!? I THOUGHT SHE WAS DEAD!
IF SHE INVOLVED IN THIS AFFAIR, THEN HEAVEN HELP US!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BACK IN GRINDELWALD...
THESE ARE MY FAVORITE PANTS!
A LITTLE SCRATCH FROM MY PET CUTS THROUGH LEATHER LIKE BUTTER, DAKOTA NORTH. THOSE CLAWS WILL SLICE YOUR SOFT SKIN WITH EASE.
MASTER, CAN YOU HAVE THE FALCON ATTACK HER BLOUSE??
I NOTICE THAT ONCE THE BIRD GETS UP TO SPEED, HE CAN'T CHANGE COURSE.
MAYBE I CAN USE THAT. AIM RIGHT HERE, FOR MY THROAT.
YEAH, THAT'S THE TICKET!

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SOGGIES MAY RULE!

WHILE SOMEWHERE IN SOGLAND...

YUK! NO SOLID EVIDENCE HERE... BUT I SUSPECT THE CAP'N'S NEARBY.

MEANWHILE, ON A HILLSLOP...

YIKES!

IT'S SPIDER-MAN, SOGMASTER!

HE, HE, HE... HE WON'T BE BUGGING US FOR LONG!

OH NO! WILL SPIDEY FREE THE CAP'N BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE??? HE MIGHT... AND YOU CAN HELP HIM DURING THE "FREE THE CAP'N" SWEEPSTAKES! BOXES OF CAP'N CRUNCH CEREAL HAVE EXCITING GAMES, CLUES AND SECRET PHONE NUMBERS TO TELL YOU HOW. IF YOU DO FREE THE CAP'N, YOU COULD BE ONE OF THE 10,000 WINNERS TO SHARE $1,000,000.

HE, HE, HE... MY GIANT FLY SPLOTTER WILL FINISH THAT PEST!

HMM... MY SPIDER-SENSE TELLS ME I BETTER FIND CAP'N CRUNCH AND SPIN ON OUTTA HERE FAST... OR BREAKFAST'LL BE DOOMED... AND I'LL BE SOGGED!

No purchase necessary. For full rules and free rescue kit, write to: FREE THE CAP'N RESCUE KIT, P.O. Box 3079, Syosset, New York 11775. Sweepstakes expires February 14, 1987.

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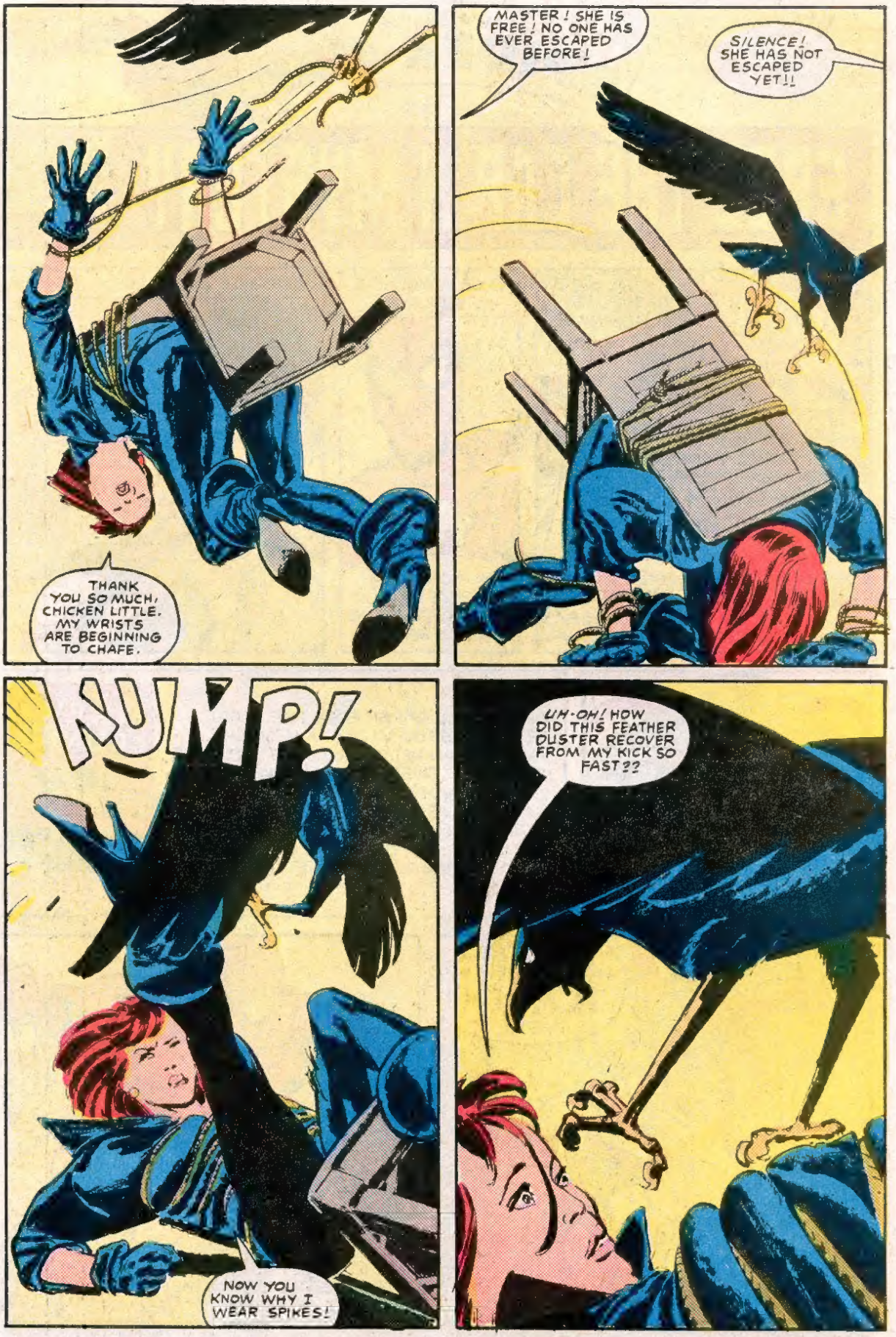
THANK YOU SO MUCH, CHICKEN LITTLE. MY WRISTS ARE BEGINNING TO CHAFE.
MASTER! SHE IS FREE! NO ONE HAS EVER ESCAPED BEFORE!
SILENCE! SHE HAS NOT ESCAPED YET!!
KUMP!
NOW YOU KNOW WHY I WEAR SPIKES!
UH-OH! HOW DID THIS FEATHER DUSTER RECOVER FROM MY KICK SO FAST??

HEADING WEST OVER THE ATLANTIC...
CLEO IS GOING TO KILL ME WHEN YOU TELL HER HOW I MESSED UP THIS JOB. I WAS SUPPOSED TO TRAP RICKY NORTH, NOT FALL FOR HIM.
BUT HE'S SO CUTE!
YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU'RE A MODEL, YOU MEET A LOT OF GUYS. PHOTOGRAPHERS. DIRECTORS. PRODUCERS. THEY'RE ALL ON THE MAKE. THEY ALL WANT A PIECE OF YOU.
RICKY WAS DIFFERENT. HE JUST LIKED TO HANG OUT WITH ME.
MAYBE HE GOT AWAY WHEN I CRASHED THE VAN I HOPE SO.
HHMMM?
LET ME UP. I NEED TO READ THE NEW VOGUE. GOT TO KEEP UP ON THE COMPETITION
NO. MISS KANE IF YOU GET OUT OF THAT SEAT, I WILL BREAK YOUR NECK.

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YES CLEO, I'M VERY HAPPY FOR YOU.
HE HASN'T FOUND THE PEN YET, BUT THAT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME
YOUR LOVER SEEMS TO BE A MAN WHO GETS WHAT HE WANTS.
I HOPE HE ISN'T TOO HARSH WITH DETECTIVE AMOS CULHANE.
I WAS RATHER LOOKING FOWARD TO RETURNING HIS CAT
GREETINGS, MY BEAUTIES! I WANT YOU TO BE THE FIRST TO SEE THE SKETCHES FOR MY FALL COLLEC-TIONS!
LET CLEO SEE THEM FIRST, LUKE. AFTER ALL, SHE SIGNS OUR CHECKS.
BUT--BUT-- THESE ALL LOOK LIKE DAKOTA NORTH!!
OF COURSE! I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET HER OUT OF MY MIND SINCE SHE RESCUED ME! SHE'S THE WOMAN OF THE 1990'S!
YOU DID A GREAT JOB, LUKE. I LOVE YOU-- UH-- YOUR WORK.
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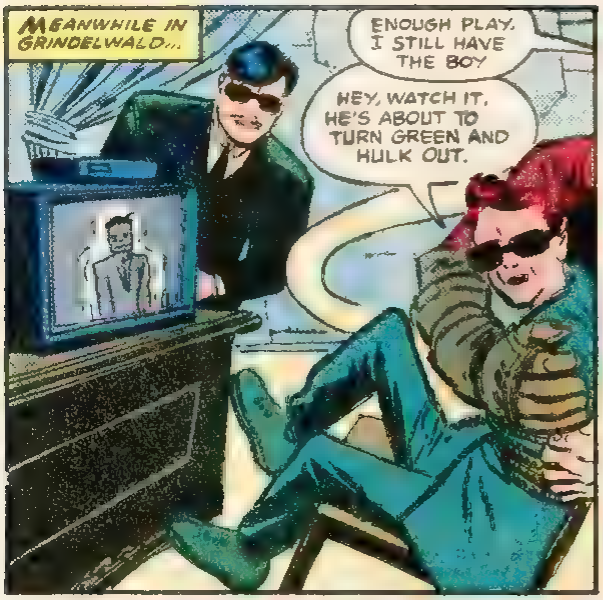
NO, CLEO. I THINK DAKOTA NORTH IS A POWERFUL, PROVOCATIVE WOMAN. ANY FEMALE WITH A BRAIN WOULD WANT TO BE HER.
BUT DARLING, I LOVE YOUR DESIGNS, BUT I COULDN'T WEAR ANY OF THIS TO THE OFFICE, IT'S TOO EXTREME.
COME TO MY PLACE FOR DINNER, AND WE'LL DISCUSS IT. WE'LL BE COMFORTABLE THERE--YOU REMEMBER.
YOU KNOW, LUKE, THESE ARE FABULOUS! I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO ACCESSORIZE IT PEFECTLY!
SEE, CLEO, ANNA UNDERSTANDS. SHE'S A MODERN WOMAN. SHE PROVES YOU WRONG!
THANKS FOR STICKING UP FOR ME IN THERE, ANNA. I APPRECIATE IT.
HEY, THAT'S OKAY. WORKING TOGETHER WITH YOU IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN MY LIFE.
GET YOUR REVOLTING HAIRY SHEDDING BODY OFF ME, YOU ALLEY CAT.

BACK IN GRINDELWALD, A BIRD CRIES IN TRIUMPH...
SKREEEE
SHEIK, YOUR BIRD LET ME GO... MAYBE IT'S ISRAELI!
MASTER, NOW YOU MUST SHOOT HER!
THIS IS SO AMUSING, DAKOTA NORTH. WE WILL YET WATCH PARTS OF YOUR BODY FLY ALL OVER THE ROOM!
WILL YOU TEACH ME HOW YOU DID THAT WHEN WE GET HOME, SIS?
SHE WILL TEACH YOU IN THE GRAVE, BOY! I WILL SEE THAT YOU ARE BURIED CLOSE TOGETHER.
LOOK OUT, DAKOTA!!
THANKS, AMOS. I SEE IT.
COME TO DAKOTA, TWEETS. I THINK IT'S TIME WE FINISHED THIS LITTLE DANCE.

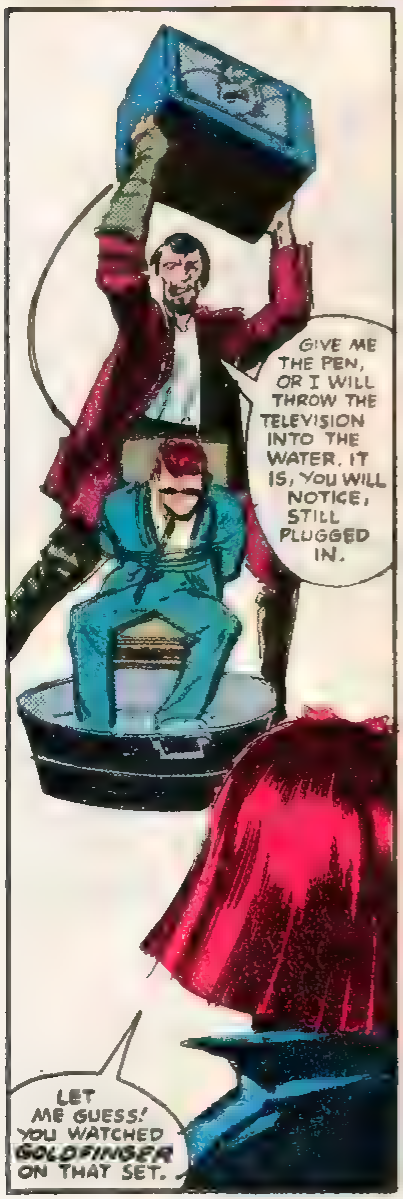
WE CAN'T DO THE MEXICAN HAT DANCE SO WHY DON'T WE DO THE SWISS CHAIR DANCE WE'LL MAKE IT UP AS WE GO ALONG.
MASTER, DO YOU SEE? SHE MISSED! SOON HER BLOOD WILL FLOW.
AMOS, I'LL BE FINISHED HERE IN A SECOND. BE READY TO ROCK.
BAP!
NICE SWING, DAKOTA.
DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN THREATEN ME WITH A PIECE OF WOOD? I AM STILL MASTER HERE
OUT OF THE FRYING PAN AND INTO THE FIRE, DAKOTA NORTH.
YOU AND CLEO, HUH? THAT MUST BE SOME SLIME FESTIVAL.

OUTSIDE DAKOTA'S NEW YORK OFFICE...
LET HIM GO, COOP I'D ENJOY THE QUIET.
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND. I'M GOING TO RYCOM IMMEDIATELY.
BUT YOU SAY YOURSELF THE WOMAN IS DANGEROUS, AND YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN FIFTEEN YEARS, SINCE BEFORE YOUR ACCIDENT.
SHUT UP, COOP. TAXI!!
AT LEAST LET ME COME WITH YOU, S J !
ABSOLUTELY NOT. YOU'LL STAY HERE WHERE YOU CAN'T GET INTO ANY TROUBLE.
HALF AN HOUR LATER, UPTOWN AT RYCOM...
NICE BUILDING. CLEO'S FOUND A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO HIDE.
LET ME HELP YOU, SIR.
OUT OF MY WAY! I WAS OPENING DOORS BEFORE YOU COULD OPEN YOUR OWN ZIPPERS.
RYCOM
CLEO!

DOWN THE HALL, IN LUKE JACOBSON'S STUDIO...
YES, YES, ANNA. I THINK I SEE WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO. I'M SURE IT'S EXACTLY WHAT CLEO WANTS.
YOU SEE? THIS SOFTENS THE LOOK AND GIVES IT A TOUCH OF COLOR.
YES. IT'S SOFTER. BUT IT ISN'T RIGHT. NO, THAT'S NOT HER AT ALL.
I'M SORRY YOU DON'T LIKE IT. I NEED YOUR APPROVAL.
THE WOMAN OF MY DREAMS FEARS NOTHING AND NO MAN. SHE IS STRONG. SHE IS FREE. SHE IS JUST LIKE DAKOTA NORTH!
YOU WANT SOMETHING TOUGHER. SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
YES, THAT'S PERFECT! YOU KNOW WHAT I WANT, ANNA!
I TRY TO PLEASE, LUKE!
YOU'RE WONDERFUL, ANNA! LET ME -- WHAT'S THAT RUDE NOISE??
CLEO!!
RATS! WHY NOW?


MEANWHILE IN GRINDELWALD...
ENOUGH PLAY. I STILL HAVE THE BOY
HEY, WATCH IT, HE'S ABOUT TO TURN GREEN AND HULK OUT.

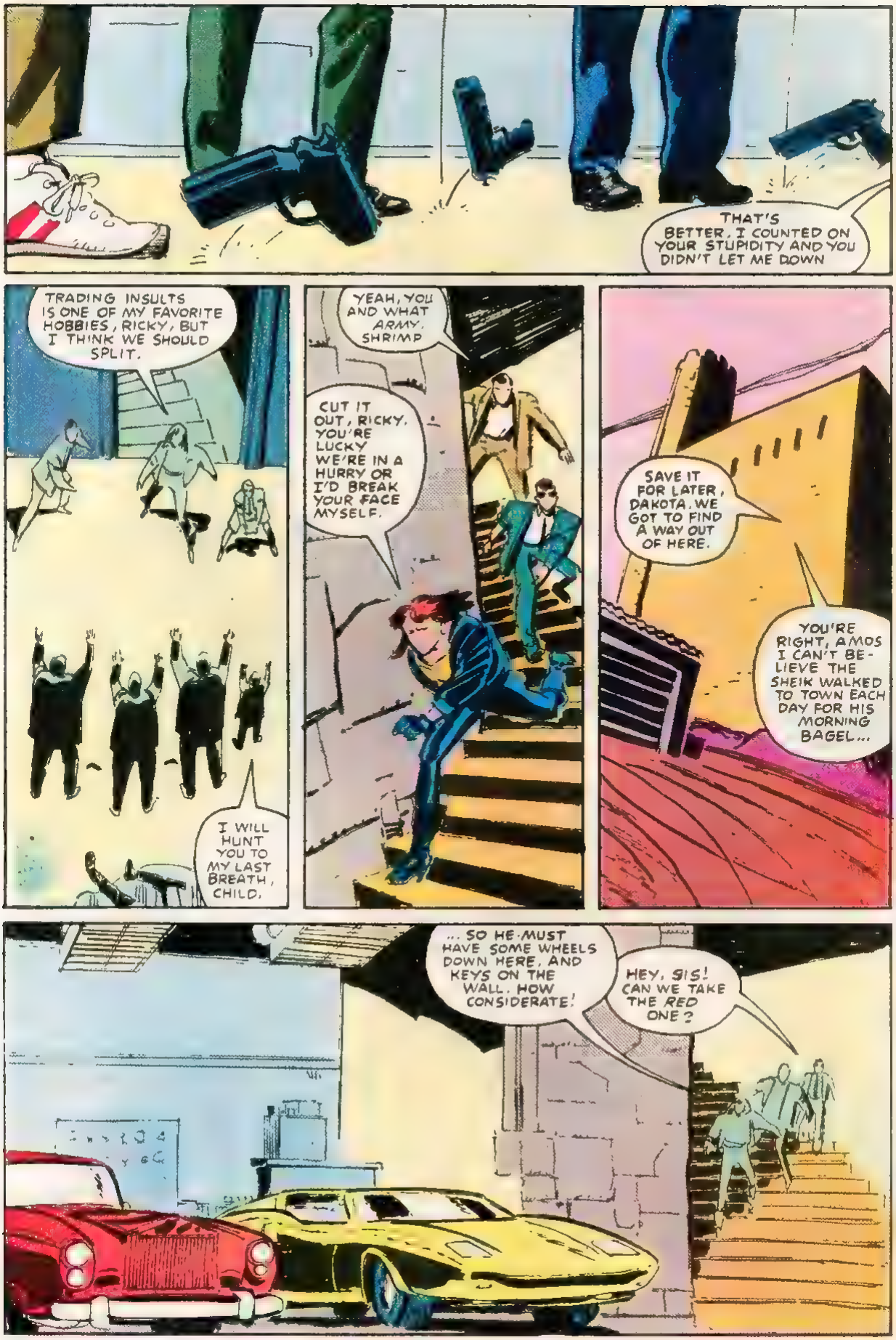
YOU WILL GIVE ME WHAT I WANT, DAKOTA NORTH, AND I WILL HARM THE BOY NO FARTHER
THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE SCARY? I'VE HAD BATHS BEFORE!


GIVE ME THE PEN, OR I WILL THROW THE TELEVISION INTO THE WATER. IT IS, YOU WILL NOTICE, STILL PLUGGED IN.
LET ME GUESS! YOU WATCHED GOLDFINGER ON THAT SET.

NICE TACKLE, SIS GREAT TIMING, TOO.
SAVE THE CHARM, RICKY YOU'LL NEED IT LATER.

BAH! I WILL USE THIS GUN. WHAT IT LACKS IN SUBTLETY IT MAKES UP FOR IN DIAMETER OF WOUND TRAUMA. MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR GODS, IF THE BOY DOESN'T TALK AT ONCE, YOU'RE DEAD MEAT, DAKOTA NORTH.
THEY WON'T KILL YOU, RICKY USE THAT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE.

IT'S TIME THIS MEMBER OF NEW YORK'S FINEST PROVED HE'S EARNED HIS RANK.
RACHKAADZ
HERE, AMOS... LET ME GET YOU OUT OF THESE ROPES.
THANKS. MAYBE I CAN DO THE SAME FOR YOU SOME DAY.
STOP, OR I'LL SHOOT!
NO! NOT HIM! HE KNOWS WHERE THE PEN IS! WE NEED HIM ALIVE!
AND DON'T YOU GOONS FORGET IT NOW STAND STILL, SHORTIE.
YOU WHERE SO BUSY DOING A FULL BODY SEARCH ON ME...
...THAT YOU NEVER NOTICED WHEN I SLIPPED THE PEN IN YOUR OWN POCKET!
I THINK YOU GUYS MIGHT WANT TO DROP YOUR GUNS BEFORE I LOSE MY TEMPER.


THAT'S BETTER. I COUNTED ON YOUR STUPIDITY AND YOU DIDN'T LET ME DOWN
TRADING INSULTS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE HOBBIES, RICKY, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD SPLIT.
I WILL HUNT YOU TO MY LAST BREATH, CHILD.
YEAH, YOU AND WHAT ARMY, SHRIMP
CUT IT OUT, RICKY. YOU'RE LUCKY WE'RE IN A HURRY OR I'D BREAK YOUR FACE MYSELF.
SAVE IT FOR LATER, DAKOTA. WE GOT TO FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, AMOS I CAN'T BE-LIEVE THE SHEIK WALKED TO TOWN EACH DAY FOR HIS MORNING BAGEL...
... SO HE MUST HAVE SOME WHEELS DOWN HERE, AND KEYS ON THE WALL. HOW CONSIDERATE!
HEY, SIS! CAN WE TAKE THE RED ONE?

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STAR BRAND

Ken's first battle using the power of the Star Brand ended:
A. ☐ In downtown Pittsburgh
B. ☐ In the Laurel Mountains
C ☐ On the moon
D. ☐ At a slag dump

When Spitfire and the Troubleshooters demanded information from Ken, he answered by:
A. ☐ Flying away too fast to be seen
B. ☐ Twisting a wrench into "sculpture"
C. ☐ Snapping a bolt in half
D. ☐ Lying

SPITFIRE AND THE TROUBLESHOOTERS

What is "Fastball"?
A. ☐ Jenny's semi
B. ☐ Tim Ferris' M.A.X. armor
C. ☐ Terry's favorite drink
D. ☐ Major Benton's Smith & Wesson

What is "Spitfire"?
A. ☐ Jenny Swensen's childhood nickname
B. ☐ The M.A.X. armor codename
C. ☐ Karl Swensen's password into his computer files
D. ☐ All of the above

PSI-FORCE

The stolen CIA list had eight names on it. Who claimed that one of those eight was missing and two others were dead?
A. ☐ Colby Shaw
B. ☐ The Skipper
C. ☐ The Director
D. ☐ Emmett Proudhawk

Who claimed two people were missing and one other was dead?
A. ☐ Colby Shaw
B. ☐ The Skipper
C. ☐ The Director
D. ☐ Emmett Proudhawk

NIGHTMASK

Where is Dr. Ballad originally from?
A. ☐ Haiti
B. ☐ Brooklyn Heights
C. ☐ Jamaica
D. ☐ Georgetown

What is Mr. Steel afraid of losing?
A. ☐ His company
B. ☐ His life
C. ☐ His wife
D. ☐ Control

MARK HAZZARD: MERC

In the New York City incident, Mal was delayed because he needed a ...
A. ☐ Train to stop the truck
B. ☐ Helicopter to trail the car
C. ☐ Tank to stop the train
D. ☐ Truck to stop the bus

What type of gun was Hazzard assembling in issue three?
A. ☐ MG-08
B. ☐ .45 ACP
C. ☐ Aug-Sa
D. ☐ .120 Mauser

KICKERS INC.

What happened to Jack's brother, Steve?
A. ☐ He became the coach of the team
B. ☐ He left New York for a Philadelphia team
C. ☐ He was killed by the loan sharks
D. ☐ He was fired

What is Jack's nickname?
A. ☐ Big John
B. ☐ Mr. Magnificent
C. ☐ Mr. Magnicomo
D. ☐ Jack Fury

D.P.7

D.P. stands for:
A. ☐ Dangerous Persons
B. ☐ Danger Patrol
C. ☐ Disaster Potential
D. ☐ Displaced Paranormals

The Clinic is operated by:
A. ☐ National Institute for Paranormal Research
B. ☐ Project: Paranormality
C. ☐ The Sanctuary Foundation
D. ☐ Department of Paranormal Activities

JUSTICE

For which law enforcement agency does Rebecca Chambers work?
A. ☐ Department of Labor
B. ☐ Department of Welfare Services
C. ☐ Department of Justice
D. ☐ Department of Health, Education and Welfare

What happend to Justice's right hand?
A. ☐ It grew an extra finger
B. ☐ He sprained it
C. ☐ It withered due to exposure to pollutants in the Earth's atmosphere
D. ☐ He lost it in an encounter with a monster

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1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. One complete set of New Universe questions, Official Rules and Entry Form appear on this page. You may also obtain a complete set of New Universe questions and entry form from your favorite comic book store or by printing your name, address, age (if under age 18, indicate parent or legal guardians' name) on a 3" x 5" card and sending it to: New Universe Sweepstakes, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. (Mutilated or illegible cards will be disqualified). One request per envelope. All requests must be received no later than December 1, 1986. Requests will be honored only while supplies last.

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YOU KNOW, SIS YOU COULD STOP TREATING ME LIKE A LITTLE KID.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO IF I DON'T RICKY? HOLD YOUR BREATH 'TIL YOU TURN BLUE.
IT WAS SWEET OF YOU TO HELP US, AMOS
HEE HEE HEE!
DAKOTA I DIDN'T PUT MY JOB IN JEOPARDY AND TRAIPSE HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD FOR A PECK ON THE CHEEK

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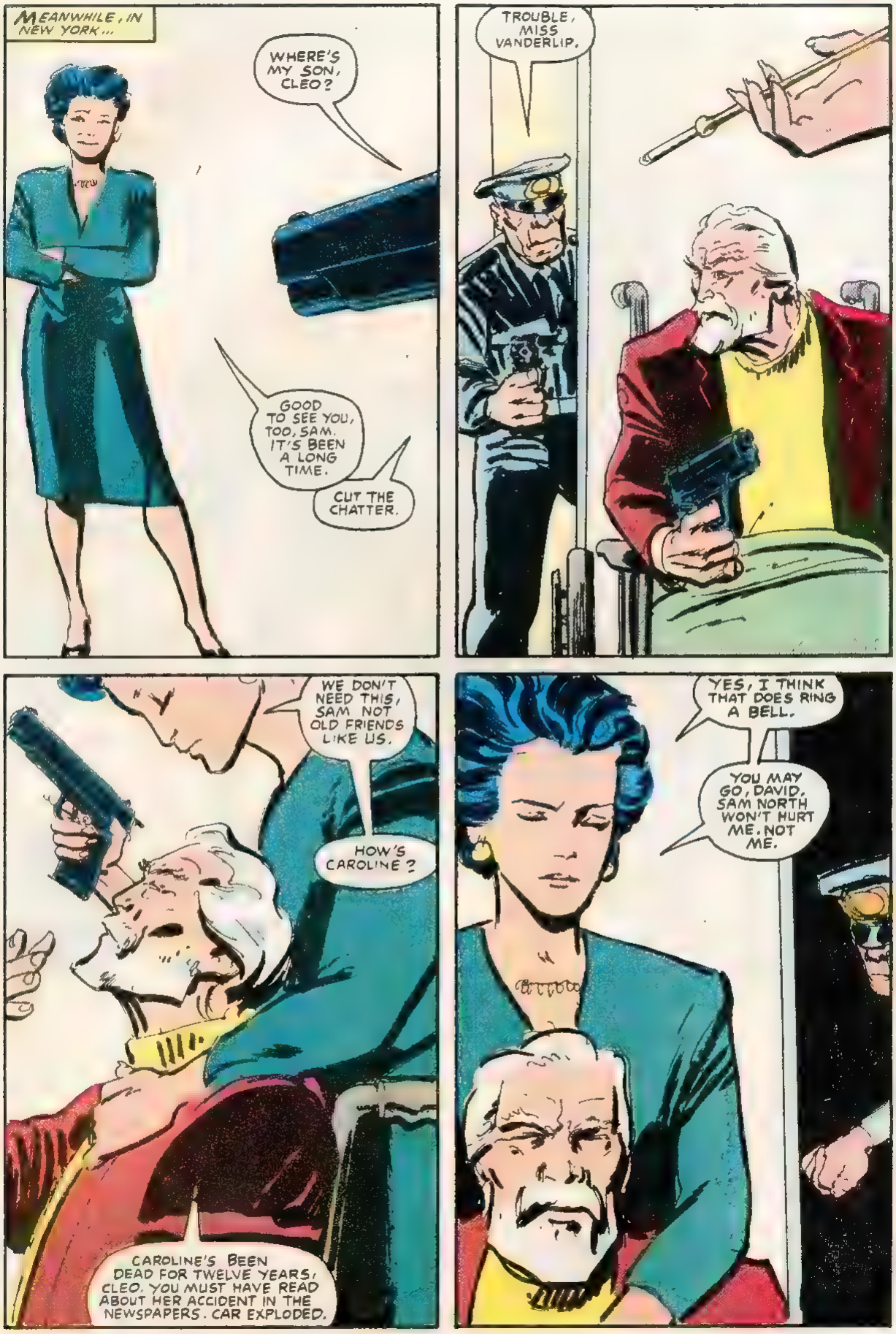
UH, SIS? IT'S GONE!
GONE?? YOU JUST HAD IT!
OF ALL THE IRRESPONSIBLE-- I'M GOING BACK UPSTAIRS AND FINISH THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL!
UPSTAIRS...
I HAVE THE PEN, NOW I SHALL RULE THE WORLD!
NOT WHILE I LIVE, SMALL ONE.
YOU ALWAYS PUSHED ME AROUND, MASTER. NO MORE!
FOOL! ONE SUCH AS YOU CANNOT SCARE A SHEIK!
SNAP!
SSSSS
UH-OH.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WHERE'S MY SON, CLEO?
GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO, SAM. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
CUT THE CHATTER.
TROUBLE, MISS VANDERLIP.
WE DON'T NEED THIS, SAM. NOT OLD FRIENDS LIKE US.
HOW'S CAROLINE?
CAROLINE'S BEEN DEAD FOR TWELVE YEARS, CLEO. YOU MUST HAVE READ ABOUT HER ACCIDENT IN THE NEWSPAPERS. CAR EXPLODED.
YES, I THINK THAT DOES RING A BELL.
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GRINDELWALD...
RICKY, IF SHE ISN'T BACK IN FIFTEEN MINUTES, I'M GOING AFTER HER. I DON'T CARE WHAT SHE SAID.
KRIEK
NO WONDER I FOUND NO ONE IN THE HALLS, SHEIK. YOU AND YOUR BOYS WERE TOO BUSY PARTYING IN HERE
THE GAS SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED ALREADY. GLAD TO SEE YOU STAYED ON TOP UNTIL THE END.
WELL, I'D LOVE TO STAY AND CHAT, BUT I'VE GOT A PLANE TO CATCH.

BULLPEN BULLETINS

About ten years ago, a lawyer friend of mine told me that I could sue DC Comics for a million dollars or more. The lawyer, a lady who'd worked in the comics business for many years, had discovered that I'd started writing professionally for DC Comics in 1965 when I was *thirteen years old*, and had written many dozens of stories for DC's top-selling titles while I was between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. Because I was a *minor*, she said, the legal agreements that I'd signed granting DC ownership of the stories I'd written and the characters I'd created (two of which were featured in their own series) were meaningless. She told me that I *owned* those stories, and would be entitled to all the income DC had received from licensing them for publication worldwide, or statutory copyright damages, whichever was greater. She said the case was airtight, and urged me to pursue it.

I never even considered it for a moment.

You see, I'd been offered the same deal as everybody else in comics in those days, and, minor or not, I'd understood it perfectly. Moreover, I'd agreed to it *enthusiastically*—thrilled to have the chance to write comics, and very glad to be paid what I was paid, because my family *needed* that money.

It wouldn't be right to go back on the deal.

Recently, a reporter from Phoenix asked me, "Do you think your comics provide good role models for your younger readers?" That's a pretty standard question, and I gave it the standard answer—that providing good role models is not our goal. We don't try to preach morals or values—business, we feel, best left to parents and educators. We're *entertainers*. Our business is telling good stories.

He seemed happy with that answer, and the interview moved on. Since then, however, I've given that subject more thought. The fact is that a *good* story must leave the reader with something more than he started with—a thought, an idea, an insight . . . What thoughts, ideas and insights were conveyed to *me* when I was a reader?

The Amazing Spider-Man was my favorite title back then. I identified with Peter Parker, because he and his Aunt May had money troubles just like my family did. Often his need was desperate, and he was faced with a choice between doing the self-serving, expedient thing and doing the *right* thing. He wasn't a paragon. Once or twice he slipped. Hey, he was only human. But, you know, I could tell that he learned from his mistakes, and in the end, when it counted, he always chose to do the *right* thing.

My lawyer friend's name came up in conversation the other day, reminding me of my choice not to sue DC. It occurred to me then that Peter Parker wouldn't have done it either.

Jim Shooter
Editor in Chief

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LATER, AT DAKOTA'S OFFICE IN NEW YORK...
SO ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE EMPTY PEN? ALL THE GAS IS GONE?
YEAH, AND YOU STILL OWE ME $500!
THIS CLEO VANDERLIP YOU MENTIONED CAME OVER TO MY APARTMENT SAID SHE'D LOOK AFTER MY CAT.
YOU'RE KIDDING? WHEN?
BOSS, WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR OLD MAN. HE'S DRIVING ME NUTS! THOUGHT HE'D NEVER LEAVE.
JUST BEFORE I CAME TO GET YOU MAYBE I SHOULD STAY AND WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT.
SURE, I LIKE THAT IDEA, COME ON UPSTAIRS. THAT WAY WE CAN TAKE OUR SHOES OFF AND--
DINGDONG
I'LL GET IT, I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERRUPTING ANY OFFICIAL POLICE BUSINESS.
NO, I'LL GET IT. THESE TWO ARE MAKIN' ME SICK!
RICKY! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME! I'M SO SCARED. CAN I STAY HERE FOR A WHILE? HIDE ME, PLEASE!
DAISY!

DAWN, UPTOWN...
SO YOU HAD TO RAISE TWO CHILDREN BY YOURSELF, SAM. HOW AWFUL FOR YOU.
WASN'T SO BAD, CLEO.
RYCON
BY THE WAY, WHERE ARE THEY?
WHY DO YOU THINK I WOULD KNOW?
BECAUSE DAKOTA MENTIONED YOU. SHE MAY BE STUBBORN, BUT SHE'S NOT OFTEN WRONG ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT.
REALLY, SAM. WOULD I BE DOING THIS IF I HAD THEM?
YOU FORGET, CLEO, I KNOW YOU.
OH, SAM. PROMISE ME YOU WON'T HURT ME AGAIN.

THIS IS WHERE WE USUALLY PUT THE BLURB FOR THE NEXT ISSUE, IF THERE WAS A NEXT ISSUE, BUT THERE ISN'T.

FASHION STATEMENTS

We like to get your letters. Send them to Marvel Comics, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y., 10016
And if you don't want your address published, please tell us.

Dear Marvel Comic People,

Dakota North is a great comic. I like it a lot, but there are a few things:

1. Dakota North deserves to be printed monthly (or even weekly. . .or even daily).

2. How old are Dakota and Daisy?

3. Please have a crossover with Dakota North and the Fantastic Four.

If and when you have a letters page, and you print my letter, please say "hi" to my friend Chad Benson, who should be reading this.

Ernie Roseler
Jonesville, MI

Dakota is 25 years old. Daisy is 16. Sorry, we aren't allowed to print personal messages on these pages.

Dear People,

This book is exciting, original, brilliantly done, clever, outside the mainstream, idiosyncratic, and interesting. The implications are obvious—it'll never last. the only thing that'll make it get through the year is a guest-shot by the X-Men or Ricky turning out to be a mutant.

In the meantime, however, I'm enjoying the bizarre plot with little Ricky and the dastardly Daisy running around Paris. No question she's earning whatever she's being paid. Playing up to a smug little jerk like Ricky must be a difficult job. I think what I like best in this book is the weird way Dakota seems to be the only person in the world who isn't a caricature. In other books, this'd be a problem, but here it only adds to the intentionally out-of-tune tone of the story, somehow managing to play a straight adventure story while simultaneously parodying adventure stories.

Not crazy about Marvel's only solo book starring a woman being so completely outside of the mainstream (at least it's not another spinoff; I was terrified the next one'd be Dare She-Devil or Nursing Administrator Strange), but since its so good, I really don't have any reason to complain. I hope my rather gloomy prediction turns out to be wrong and DAKOTA NORTH turns out to be the smash hit of 1986. Better play it safe, though; enroll the cast in ninja classes.

Michael Pickens
Centerburg, OH

Dear Martha Thomases,

I started to collect DAKOTA NORTH INVESTIGATIONS because 1) it was just starting, and I could have the whole series; 2)I love action!; 3)it had a cool name, even if it is an odd one for a person.

Actually, I expected a man to be in it, but Dakota is an exciting character, and I wouldn't have it any other way. I have a few questions: Why is Dakota so much older than Ricky? What happened to her mother? Will Luke ever love Anna? I hope so!

Gregory S. Collins
Mason City, Iowa 50401

It's unusual for siblings to be as different in age as Ricky and Dakota, but not impossible. We'll be learning more about Mrs. North in future issues. As for Luke's true love, we think you'll be surprised. Stay tuned!

Dear Ms. Thomases,

I'm not particularly a hard-core comics fan, but the premise of your book caught my attention. I've written film reviews for various small newspapers in Tennesee for seven years now, and I've come to the conclusion that character development makes or breaks most films. It also seems to be the aspect that separates great comics from the merely interesting. And it is the characters, much more than the plot, that make me think Dakota North may turn into something exceptional. I'm going to attempt to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the first issue as I see them; I *do* like the book, and want it to succeed.

Dakota North herself clearly echoes the traditions that have influenced her—Modesty Blaise, Brenda Starr and so on. since you are working in that tradition, or at least using it as a base to jump from, the more cliched aspects of Dakota's character can be overlooked. In fact, the only thing that leaps out as being totally cliched is Dakota's affluence. While the comments on pages 2 and 3 indicate that business isn't particularly good, there are no overt signs of poverty. There are hints of a really original idea here: a fashion-conscious action heroine who has to scramble to stay ahead of her creditors, and who spends most of what she earns on the clothes she needs to retain her affluent appearances.

One great mistake would be the softening of Dakota's character. The moment that she first really locks her character in occurs at Bleumie's, when she worries about hitting an innocent bystander. Her reason—that she might be sued—gives her just the right hard edge she needs to be viable and interesting. You've established her just right.

Dakota's relationships with the other characters support this hardness while providing more of the book's originality. Ricky, her brother, is one of your better creations, and his matter-of-fact statement on page 8 that Dakota hates him could lead to a very interesting recurring motif.

Dakota's dislike of Luke Jacobson, mentioned on page 15, is a neat reversal of the protective role usually played by the men in stories like this. Again, this reaffirms Dakota's hardness without being too obtrusive about it. Placing this rough-and-ready female among the fashion crowd—popularly regarded as "wimps and sissies"—at least as far as men are concerned—could make for some telling social commentary on role-playing. Your hints of a great conspiracy in the fashion business, seem to imply that you intend to continue placing your stories within this setting. No complaint here, but please continue to drop in the little digs at consumer shallowness.

DAKOTA NORTH has great potential. The characters are there, the milieu has a unique aspect, and there seems to be no shortage of ideas. Keep up the good work, and I hope the response allows you to go monthly very soon.

Alexander Bledsoe
Martin, TN

Thanks for a thoughtful letter, Alexander, and apologies for cutting it so severely. If you've read our story this far, you know that Dakota and Ricky don't really hate each other. They simply annoy each other as only two people raised in the same household can.

To Martha Thomases:

I am writing to constructively criticize the first issue of DAKOTA NORTH INVESTIGATIONS. Overall I am pleased and I think you have something here, but there is much room for improvement.

When Otto, the cop, punches the thug in the Guggenheim, it was a good scene. But the "I hate modern art" line was a bit corny, too coincidental, and a heavy compromise for a conclusion.

I don't understand the conflict between Cleo and SJ. Maybe this will be resolved in a future issue.

I can't see anyone running in three-inch spike heels, especially down stairs to beat an elevator. Then, Dakota chases Otto's mugs to Bleumie's freight entrance. Since she is cut off, she crashes through a window and up and escalator. I can live with this until I see the mugs' black limo parked in the center of the store. How or why did they drive from the freight elevator to the main shopping area?

The whole story has to be more fluent and coherent. Sometimes my friends and I just didn't know where we were until a second or third reading.

Please keep it realistic. I'm tired of being presented with everything in a third grade/TV mentality. I couldn't stand it in Iron Eagle, Return of the Jedi, or Hart to Hart, where the good guy never gets shot.

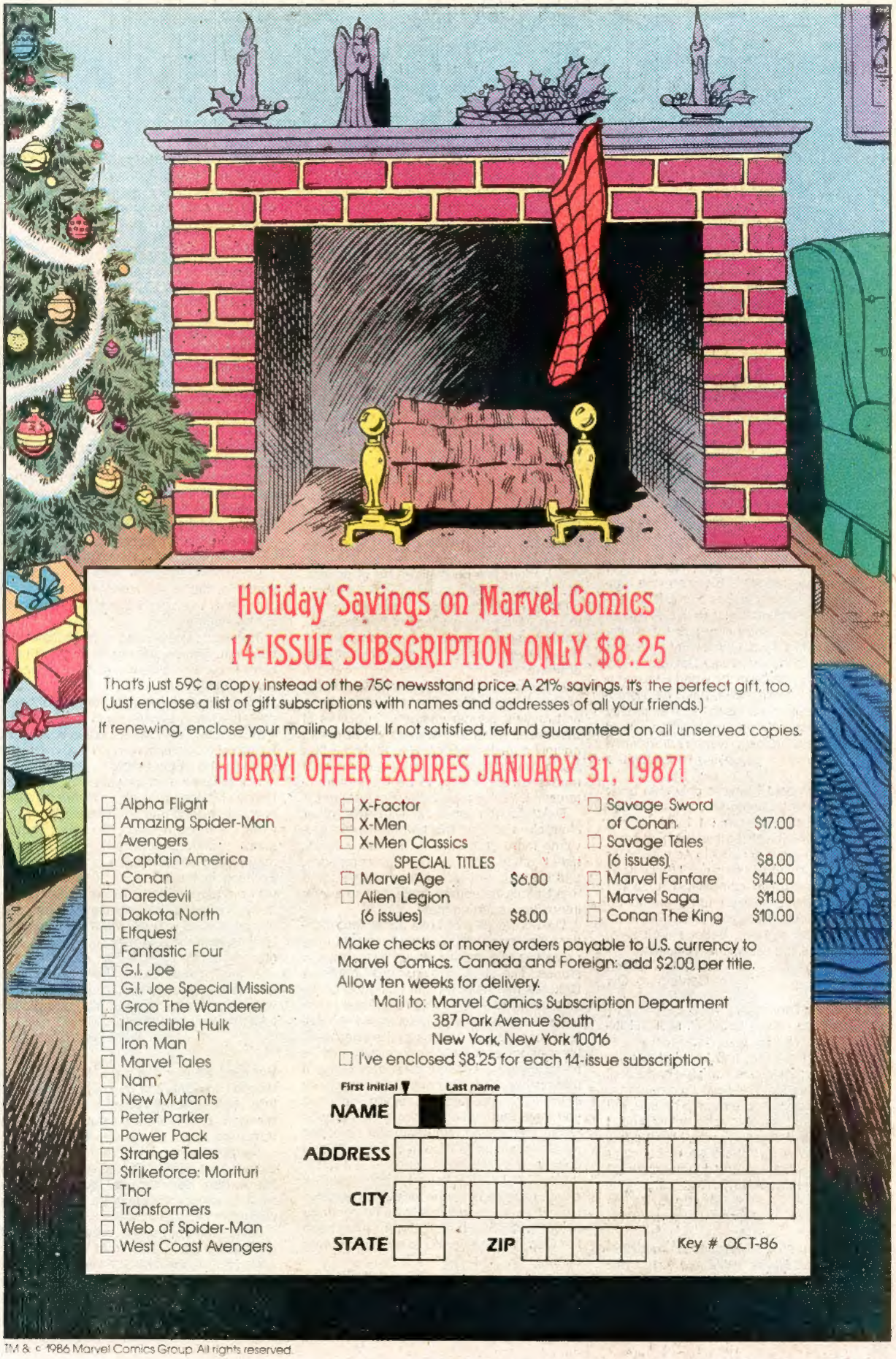
I'm pleased that Dakota isn't too gun happy and does think about bystanders and lawsuits, a good humane and modern twist. I like the modern touch, the lingo, bombs, alarm systems, powerful handguns, the motorcycle, SJ's boom box, and the fashion. Perhaps in the future, Dakota could deal with modern problems like terrorism (especially at airports) and computer crime, and she could deal with all facets of technology, like jets, hydroboats, lasers, drugs, labs, and nuclear reactors.

All in all, it's not too bad. Keep up the good work and nice drawings. Thanks for taking your time to read this fan mail and please take this into consideration.

Matthew J. Domnarski
Antrim, NH

We read all our fan mail, Matt, and it's time well spent. The mugs got their limo into the center of Bleumie's by plowing through the makeup counters, something we want to do every time some salesgirl squirts us with perfume without asking first. Honestly, the aisles in most Manhattan department stores are extremely wide, especially on the first floor where traffic is heaviest.

As for the shoes, that's been a point of debate up here, and we'd like to know what you readers think. How many of you like high heels? How many believe Dakota can run fast when she wears them? How many would believe it's a mystical feminine ninja martial art?



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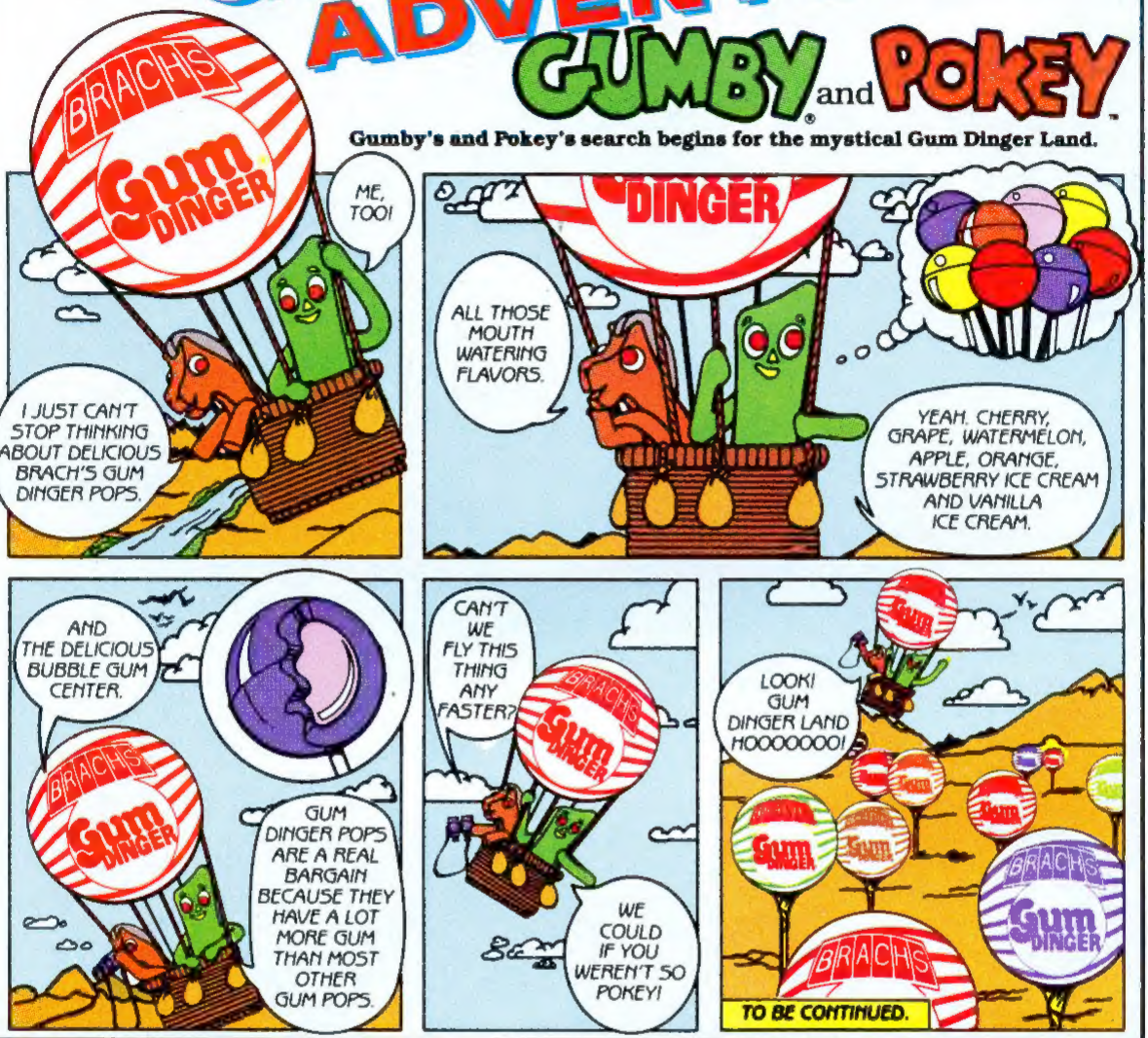
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